



INFORMATION FOR RIDING ACROSS THE NULLARBOR

Compiled from the personal experiences of The Nullaboys,
who have crossed the continent many times since the formation of the club in 1998.

All of our trips have started and finished in Perth, Western Australia, so this has been written with those of you in mind that are coming from the east coast of Australia.

As you will be riding from places as far north as Cape York, and south from Tasmania, we thought it best to leave it to you to get to the starting point of Port Augusta in South Australia, and then we will inform you from there.

Normally, we would leave from Adelaide at 7.00am in the morning and ride through to Port Augusta, arriving at around 10.00am as we usually have a short lay-over in Adelaide before heading across the Nullarbor for home, just so we can get packed and prepared for the ride across.

But it is from Port Augusta that you will start your trek across the continent and eventually arrive in Perth, the sunny capital of Western Australia, some 2400kms away to the west.

Before you head off on your epic journey, I would suggest that you have the bike checked and serviced first.

Things like tyres, the battery, any little oil leaks, re-grease the wheel bearings, have them all done before you head off because there is nowhere to get the bike repaired on the way over.

If your bike is not in good condition now, there is a good chance you may not even make it to the other side, and that will completely stuff up your ride and your holiday too.

Remember that the bike is going to be running for long periods at a time, at highway speeds, for 3 or 4 or 5 days on end, so everything must be spot-on. If it's not, you could end up stopped in the middle of nowhere and it could be a very expensive exercise to get it back home again from there.

Even though the bike has run faultless each day, just have a look over it each night after your travels. Grab a beer, sit down near the bike and just stare at it. You'll be surprised of the little things you can see each night, things that might need tightening, things that you might not have noticed before.

Bolts coming loose, the little oil leaks appearing, or maybe the little oil leaks that are getting bigger, or something that's getting ready to fall off tomorrow. Trust me, things do fall off and usually when you're miles from home and always without the tools to fix it. It's just called 'preventative maintenance'. It doesn't take long to do, and more importantly, it could save your arse one day.

Take a basic tool kit with you too, just so you can fix these things each night. A couple spanners, a pair of pliers, a couple of screwdrivers, some rag, Allen Keys, a roll of tape, some zip ties, a couple of spark plugs, and a spanner to change them with too. Hopefully, they may never be needed, and even better, never used, but why not carry them, just in case.

Pack some Sun Screen or a Bandana too, because you'll need it in the late afternoon when you're riding into the sun. After a couple of days, you start to peel, badly, and I know because it happened to me on the first trip across.

Normally, we leave at sun-up every day, and try to keep your stops to a minimum. We allow 30-40 minutes at each fuel / food stop and 15 minutes at fuel only stops. As we travel in a group, we have found that the bigger the group, the slower things happen at these stops, so we have to impose a time limit on them.

By doing this, we find we can accomplish 800-900kms per day easily. The other reason is that the last thing you want is to find yourself riding into the dark to get to the great overnight stops we mention on this page. There are too many animals out there that move around at dusk, so we try to be off the road by 4.00pm each day.

So, now that you know what time to leave, you've got the bike serviced and ready to roll, the tank is full of fuel and you're packed and ready to go, let's hit the road and head west into the sunset.

Here's a bit of trivia for you ... Did you know that Perth is the only capital city in Australia where the evening sun sets into the ocean. It's true all the others either set into the land mass behind them, or into a bay or a sea. Perth is the only one that has the sun set into an ocean, the Indian Ocean.

Okay, leaving Port Augusta, about 20kms out, on the left hand side, are the famous Water Tanks. This is where you'll find the largest Harley Davidson logo we have ever come across, well, that's providing it hasn't been defaced again by graffiti vandals.

We believe that the West Coast South Oz HOG Chapter is responsible for this piece of artwork and, from time to time, they have to re-paint it so as to maintain it for our viewing pleasure. Take a photo if you can, it may be the only time you come past here on the bike and it's in one piece.

Down the road a little further and you will get a choice to go straight on or turn right. Straight on will take you south down the Eyre Peninsula to Whyalla, Port Lincoln and back up via Smokey Bay, Streaky Bay and to Ceduna. It's a great ride if you have the time, but this leg will add an extra day to your journey at least.

Turn right and you'll head across on the more express route, past the mining town of Iron Knob, onto the Nullarbor and finally into Perth. Over the years of our crossing, we have watched the hill at Iron Knob change its shape as the mining eats away at the ore body contained within its shell. No doubt, one day it will be gone forever, and it'll become another big hole in the ground.

Through the rolling hills you go as you get deeper into the farming communities of the peninsula, and you'll travel through towns with some pretty weird names to pronounce, but don't tell the locals we said that.

Towns like Kimba, with its huge Pink Galah as its tourist attraction, Kyancutta and Poochera. I've always thought of Kimba the White Lion going through here, yet they want a Pink Galah ... go figure !!!

From Kimba, it's another 100kms to go as you roll on through a couple of small wayside farming towns and finally into Wudinna. Now this is one great town to stay at overnight, we stay here every time we cross the paddock, but remember to fuel up as you arrive ... because the locals don't get up too early out here.

It has a great Hotel / Motel with comfy rooms and good food and we always get looked after well. As we always travel in a group, we get a great rate for a shared motel room and an evening meal. If you decide to stay, make sure you ask for the special Nullaboys price.

We normally bunk together to cut costs, and usually end up paying a fairly small fee per head for the bed and meal. Mind you, that small fee is also heavily subsidised with the extra bar takings we provide to them for our night of merriment.

If you wish, there is a caravan park in town also, but watch out for the ants because they like to sleep in the tent with you, and there are billions of them.

In the morning, we set off when the sun is up, usually around 7.00am and then run in the crisp clean air until we come to Ceduna and breakfast. It's fuel up first, then around to the Ceduna Bakery in the main street because nothing beats a fresh pie or pasty for breakfast, and then wash it all down with a hot coffee.... ha ha ha

We might look a bit scruffy, but we still eat well and the girls at the bakery always look forward to seeing our smiling faces and stories of the roads travelled. I think they're envious actually. Besides, they reckon we're regulars now as we drop in twice a year. Once on the way over for lunch and then a few weeks later on the way home, when we roll in for breakfast.

After breakfast, it's out of Ceduna, past the east bound Quarantine station, and west towards Penong and then Nundroo. This is mainly all farming area through here and the roads are all pretty straight. If you find yourself getting bored, you can always check the numbers on the power poles, up or down, depending on which way you're travelling. It'll keep you amused for a while ☺

At Nundroo, we re-fuel and just grab a drink and continue westward, going past Yalata Aboriginal Mission. If you look along the sides of the road through this part of the trip, you'll see parts of the old gravel road that was in operation for many many years before the new bitumen road was commissioned.

You'll travel with a lot of bush on either side of the road for a little while and then, all of a sudden, you'll crest a hill and see white sand hills in the distance over on the left. Don't get too excited, you're not there yet, it's just an indication that you're getting close to the bottom edge of Australia.

You're actually coming up to the real start of the Nullarbor Plain, which by the way is only about 32kms long. If you've brought your dog along for the ride, pull over and let him have a leak on the trees, because there's not many coming for a little while now. If you did Latin at school, you'll remember ... Null Arbor = No Trees

A little further on and you will see a sign saying "Head of the Bight". It's a popular tourist spot to watch the whales frolicking in the ocean, but it's seasonal and you'll have to be lucky.

It's still worth swinging in for a look even if it's not whale-watching season as there is a museum there and a walk trail that'll take you down pretty close to the water's edge.

You've got about 200kms to go to the border, and you're running with the sun so if you're travelling okay, and you've got some spare cash to throw around, go up in the spotter plane that operates out of Nullarbor Roadhouse.

You will fly over the cliffs and the shear drop from land to water is something to behold, and don't forget the camera.

From Nullarbor to the border is a bit of a touristy ride and it's along this section you'll need your camera handy to catch shots of things you may never see again, so don't pack it too deep into the saddle bags.

Things like the Sea Fog, as it rolls in from the ocean over the top of the cliffs, and then disappears before your eyes, or bands of rain showers stretching out in front of you, whilst you stand in the brilliant sunshine not metres from it. It is an amazing place out here, and the more times you travel it, the more amazing it becomes.

60kms from Nullarbor is the first real guaranteed camera opportunity, but if you miss it there are 6 or 7 more spots that you can view the cliffs and the Great Australian Bight from. Some are only 400mtrs from the road, some a little further, but all are easy to get to even if they are gravel roads, and all are definitely worth the effort.

Border Village is the western edge of South Australia, and it's also where you will need to pass through the Quarantine Station to enter WA.

Here your choices will be ... go through quarantine and on to Eucla tonight and sleep in WA, or stay at Border Village, do the quarantine thing in the morning and have another night in SA. Fuel is available 24/7 at both places, and the prices are pretty much the same too.

Accommodation is back-packers at BV and motel rooms at Eucla, so depending on your cash, take your pick of cheap or flash.

So now, it's just a case of either getting searched and declaring all the contraband tonight, or doing it in the morning when you go through quarantine and enter WA. Gees, what a big choice to make ?? Do it today or do it tomorrow !! ☺

Sometimes, quarantine can be a hassle as they might want to search the bike for fruits / nuts / drugs / guns / etc and sometimes they get all gung-ho and want to strip the bike to nearly nothing. Other times, they like you're smiling faces and just wave you through, each time is different, but always exciting.

Border Village is also a great place to stop overnight and who knows, you might even see a UFO up in the sky that night. This place has recorded more UFO sightings than anywhere else in Australia, so keep your eyes open, or YOU could be the next one to be taken and probed anally

But go 13kms further on and you've arrived into Eucla, the first town you will come to in WA and the site of the old telegraph station. It's just about buried in the sand now, but you can still walk down to it and take photos if you wish.

Eucla also houses the first police station on the WA side of the border, and sometimes the boys in blue will get a bit restless and bored with life, so be prepared to be intercepted and have your licence checked for validity.

Down through the Eucla Pass and onto the flat lands below, which used to be underwater many many years back, but are now just the coastal plains. This is a great road to rocket along, but beware of the urge to twist and go, as the police may be waiting for you to come howling along here.

Remember, if you are riding a Harley Davidson, it can be heard from many miles away, especially when it's under a heavy throttle load, so you can almost guarantee that they know when you coming along that road.

The next stop is Mundrabilla, 65kms down the track, and if you like Lobster, well this is the place for you. Mundrabilla has a Lobster fishing industry down on the coast, and a plentiful supply in the fridge too.

If you have a vehicle in your group, this is a good place to fuel up as it will be a fair bit cheaper than the other fuel vendors along the Nullarbor.

After Mundrabilla is Madura Pass, 115kms along, and plenty of food, fuel and accommodation to be had. Also, as you leave here and head up the hill and back on to the top of Australia again, on your right hand side, on top of the hill, is a look-out area and it's well worth the stop too.

The view from here is magical and you can see the ocean and dream of what the planet must have looked like back in the dinosaur era. Drag out the camera again for some more happy snaps.

After your rest, it's on to Cocklebidy for more fuel and maybe some breakfast too. This is another bike friendly establishment on the road west and another one that's had its ups and downs over the years with different landlords.

Another 80kms down the track and you'll roll into Caiguna. This place was renovated back in 2000-ish, and is now much friendlier place than it used to be in the early days. Good food, fuel and service with a smile, some days, and although it's still not perfect, it's a hell of a lot better than it was.

At one stage, they would only provide you with one pump to fuel the bikes at, then made you pay for each bike before you moved it and the process would repeat for the next one to start fuelling up at, and when you have a group of 10 or more, it slows the whole process down to buggery.

In the early days, stopping here for fuel was a massive pain in the arse, and you could easily loose an hour just to get fuel in the bikes, so we used to ride straight past, and pray we would make it to Cocklebidy or Balladonia, depending on the direction travelled. Things are much better now, and we can stop without the hassles.

Heading further west, it's on to Balladonia, but before you get there, you will leave Caiguna and travel on the longest straight stretch of road in Australia. 142.6kms [or 90 miles in the old language] and it is as flat as a tack and not a corner in sight.

By the way, Nullaboys tradition is to indicate at the sweeping left hander at the other end. Yeah, we know it's 142.6kms down the road, but it breaks the monotony of the moment, so try not to forget ☺

Balladonia is only 191kms from Norseman, and it's the last roadhouse you will pass through on the Eyre Highway heading west. When you get to Norseman, you will have officially crossed the Nullarbor on your motorcycle, but you are still at least a full days ride from Perth when you get there.

It's a 4 day trip for us from Adelaide to Perth, mainly because we try to ride responsibly, reasonably close to the posted speed limit and enjoy the trip.

However, it can be done quicker, but why would you want too ?? You'd miss all of the sights and smells along the way.

I've spoken to riders along the way who have done it much quicker, like the 2 idiots that made the 2800km journey from Perth to Adelaide in 18¼ hours, and that included fuel, food and piss breaks. They were happy to brag about cracking 240-260kph out there, and do it for hour after hour.

I still haven't worked out if they were brave or just bloody stupid, but I'm leaning heavily for bloody stupid. I hit a rabbit many years ago at 130kph, and it scared the living shit out of me back then so the thought of doing it at 260kph just frightens me no end.

I reckon life is short enough, so why the hell try to get there faster than you need too. Each to their own I suppose, but I certainly don't wish to be the one to clean up the mess they leave behind.

If you hit an animal out there, at any speed, it might be the last thing you do. I've seen what they can do to a truck with all the bar work on them, so imagine what they can do to you and your bike, and more importantly, to your pillion.

Enjoy the ride and have fun by all means, but just remember where you are. Remember that you're a long way from any medical assistance, and you're on holidays too. Please keep your eyes open, and be very aware of the dangers that live out there. Even travelling in a group, a crash is still going to hurt you, and destroy everyone else's fun too.

From Norseman, you can either stop for the night, or go left to Esperance and along the coast, or turn right and head for Kalgoorlie or Coolgardie.

Esperance is a farming community town of around 10,000 people and also supports both a fishing and a tourism industry, as well as its surrounding farming community.

Kalgoorlie on the other hand is a booming mining town, with lots to see and do. It's also a town with lots of old-time history, and a leftovers from a by-gone gold mining era, with its stories of un-told riches, two-up rings, brothels and prostitution.

If you can find the time, stay a day or two and have a good look around. In its hay-day, Kalgoorlie had a pub on every corner, more breweries than you could count on both hands and feet, and a red light district that would've made Kings Cross look like the Vatican City during holy week.

Norseman to Perth, via Esperance is around 1000kms, and via Kalgoorlie is about 800kms, but whichever way you go, you're heading back to civilization again.

You will find that going back home, travelling from Perth to Adelaide, is a little bit harder as you are going against the clock, and against the sun too, and this will make your riding day naturally shorter. However, even in a group of

15 or 16, you can still achieve 750kms-800kms per day, which will make it a comfortable 4 day trip back to Adelaide.

Some of you may have concerns regarding fuel, and how far between stops out there, so I've listed them for you so you can work out your requirements.

Port Augusta to Kimba ... 155kms
Kimba to Kyancutta to Wudinna ... 100kms
Wudinna to Minnipa ... 42kms
Minnipa to Poochera ... 41kms
Poochera to Wirrulla ... 53kms
Wirrulla to Ceduna ... 65kms
Ceduna to Penong ... 76kms
Penong to Nundroo ... 80kms
Nundroo to Yalata to Nullarbor ... 148kms
Nullarbor to Border Village ... 182kms
Border Village to Eucla ... 13kms
Eucla to Mundrabilla ... 65kms
Mundrabilla to Madura Pass ... 115kms
Madura Pass to Cocklebiddy ... 91kms
Cocklebiddy to Caiguna ... 65kms
Caiguna to Balladonia ... 161kms
Balladonia to Norseman ... 188kms

Well, that's it. We hope that you have enjoyed your 'virtual' ride across the paddock that we've taken you on, and we hope that one day, you will travel across it safely, both accident and incident free.

We've heard people complaining that the Nullarbor is dead, boring and lifeless, but I'll bet that those people did it by car, flat out with windows up, air-con on, CD playing in the background.

If they bothered to wind down the window, and smell the air, or just stop every now and then and have a look at the countryside, I think that they would change their opinion.

The Nullarbor is far from dead and it's certainly not boring. There is plenty to see and to do, and it is a great ride. Just show it a bit of respect, treat it right and you will have a ball travelling across the continent.

If you decide to travel over on your bike, let us know whether you enjoyed it or not. And let us know if we've missed anything too, because you might have discovered something we have missed during our many trips across and back.

Remember that this ride is a big part of your holiday and treat it that way. Don't hurry it and make it rush by. Enjoy the travel just as much as the destination you are heading for and your holiday will be a great adventure.

Ride safely in this country of ours, and maybe we'll see you on the road or at a road house somewhere, sometime in the future.

Wizard and the Nullaboys

The information contained in this document has been compiled from personal experiences and after many crossings of the Nullarbor, all by motorcycle. It is offered purely as an guide to help you plan your ride across Australia, and is based on the experiences and knowledge that we have gained during these rides.

No responsibility will be accepted for any information given which maybe misleading, misread or misunderstood and you should use your own judgment and make your own decisions during your travel across Australia.